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ABSTRACT

The guide is based on project reports by the San Francisco Department of Public Health to improve and monitor perinatal health and children's health. These reports demonstrated the potential of information to help community advocacy groups, service providers, and program planners identify priorities for policy decisions and resource allocation. The first section, "Getting Started," outlines a general strategy for approaching the task of gathering information and suggests different ways of defining a target population. The second section, "Choosing Indicators," provides guidance on what information and indicators to search for. Section three, entitled, "Selecting Data Sources," guides the user in finding the sources for the information one chooses to seek. The fourth section details "Getting Data and Getting Help," and offers tips on acquiring information and working with technical advisors to analyze and interpret the data through such avenues as the Freedom of Information Act. The fifth section addresses effective display of information in "Presenting Information." The final section provides transferable techniques used in other countries of the Americas to involve community members in monitoring health needs. Four appendices provide information on: (1) maternal and child health objectives for the year 2000; (2) state sources of hospital level data; (3) U.S. standard vital records forms such as certificates of live birth and death and reports of induced termination of pregnancy and fetal death; and (4) names and addresses of state registrars of vital statistics and state health statistics offices. (Author/SD)

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